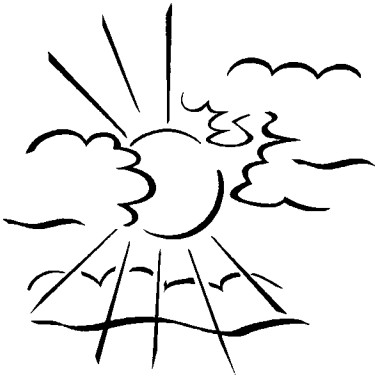


***Department  
of  
Human  
Services***

Prepared by the  
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Communications  
(517) 373-7394



\*Important story at this spot

# **Articles in Today's Clips**

## **Thursday, December 8, 2005**

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

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Published December 8, 2005

## **Bad cuts: U.S. House tries to ease deficit on backs of children**

A Lansing State Journal editorial

Michigan has made strides in collecting unpaid child support for the approximately 600,000 children who don't get regular support.

In fact, Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox has made it a priority of his office, collecting more than \$19 million in unpaid support since 2003, and charging more than 2,000 deadbeat parents with felonies because of failure to pay support.

So along comes the U.S. House of Representatives, which is prepared to pull millions of dollars from the state's child support enforcement efforts. That could mean a loss of \$397 million in child support collections over the next five years.

Advertisement

It's hard to imagine any more regressive, mean-spirited legislation than this. Voters and state leaders should give Congress an earful.

Congress has passed any number of fiscally irresponsible bills in recent years, most recently a \$286 billion transportation spending bill packed with 6,300 special "earmark" projects. Read, pork.

Runaway spending like that has contributed mightily to record and near-record budget deficits soaring above \$300 billion.

The House's answer is the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. And what kinds of things do they cut? Aid to states for the purpose of collecting child support.

The cuts would chop about \$250 million to the state's child support system, according to Michigan Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan.

Corrigan and Department of Human Services Director Marianne Udow have joined forces to criticize the House vote. We join them in calling for Congress to rethink the House's cut in funding child support collections.

Congress has dug itself a huge financial hole. It shouldn't try to climb out of it on the backs of children.

**Speak out**

- Call mid-Michigan's members of Congress:
- Sen. Carl Levin, (202) 224-6221
- Sen. Debbie Stabenow, 203-1760
- Rep. Dave Camp, (800) 342-2455
- Rep. Vern Ehlers, (202) 225-3831
- Rep. Mike Rogers, 702-8000
- Rep. Joe Schwarz, 323-6600

# Child support

## Federal cuts for enforcement would cost society more

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Thursday, December 08, 2005

If there isn't enough need in Michigan already, a proposed federal funding cut to Michigan agencies that enforce child support orders threatens to put more families on welfare.

While it's hard to argue that Congress shouldn't look for ways to reduce spending, this falls into the penny-wise-and-pound-foolish category of money management. Dollars spent collecting what's owed from noncustodial parents not only gives dependent children what they deserve, but keeps families off public assistance.

That detail apparently was overlooked by U.S. House members who voted to cut the reimbursement rate to the states' child support programs from 66 percent to 50 percent over five years. A Senate spending-reduction bill doesn't have this provision and one hopes it will win out in conference committee this week.

However, if the House plan prevails, local Friend of the Court offices would be devastated, with Genesee County anticipating a loss of 35 positions, unless the county or the state could make up the \$1.2-million annual loss. Budget realities in both governments suggest otherwise.

The importance of child support to the well-being of families cannot be overestimated. In 40 percent of the state's cases, households were on welfare until regular support payments were established. Without the enforcement help from Friend of the Court offices, as well as from local prosecutors who also stand to have their federal funding cut for this purpose, many families would return to the dole. Such a result, in so many ways, would cost society more.

## **IN OUR OPINION: Foolish Savings**

### **Cutting funds to collect child support will only prove costly**

December 7, 2005

After running up enormous budget deficits through a combination of war, pork and tax cuts, Congress is now ready to demand that the states make a contribution to reducing the red ink -- but in a way that will ultimately cost the taxpayers more money.

The House version of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005-- supported by all nine Michigan Republicans, opposed by all six Democrats in the state delegation -- includes a substantial reduction in federal funds that states use to collect child support and disburse the money to children. The direct cost to Michigan would be \$249 million over five years, but the indirect costs will be far greater, because families that aren't getting their support money often end up on welfare. A simple review of the economics involved should convince anyone in Congress, but especially the members from Michigan, that this proposal is, in a word, stupid. If the government really wanted to save money, it would give the states additional resources to be even more aggressive about ensuring support payments are made so families are not forced to seek public assistance.

The Senate version of the bill is less drastic where children are concerned.

Michigan has the fourth-highest rate among the 50 states in collecting child support. But members of Congress have to know it takes money to bring in that money -- and that doing so saves money. In the vast federal budget, certainly Congress can look elsewhere to fix a deficit problem that the states didn't create.

Thursday, December 8, 2005

The Detroit News

Special Letter

## **Michigan loses if child support funds get cut**

A government spending cut that causes more government spending, makes welfare recipients out of independent families and shifts the burden from private individuals to taxpayers.

If you read the Dec. 5 article, "Federal cuts threaten poor," you know that is an apt description of proposed federal funding cuts for child support enforcement and other welfare services. These reductions could cost Michigan \$249 million over five years, with devastating results for more than 1 million Michigan families, representing nearly a third of the state's children.

The House version of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 would reduce federal reimbursement for states' child support administration expenses to 50 percent from 66 percent. That means \$58.8 million less to enforce child support in Michigan during the next five years, and layoffs among about 2,800 state workers who serve the more than 2.5 million citizens in the child support system. Estimates based on Congressional Budget Office projections indicate that Michigan will lose \$397 million in child support collections over five years and more than \$1.2 billion lost over 10 years.

If enforcement is reduced, many of the families who now live independently are going to be forced onto welfare. A 1999 report commissioned by the Department of Health and Human Services found that the federal government spent \$4 billion on child support enforcement -- but saved \$5 billion in federal and state costs to other human services programs. Why cut funding for one of the most cost-effective government programs?

*Maura D. Corrigan*

*Justice, Michigan Supreme Court  
Lansing*

Local columnists

## **LOCAL COMMENT: YOUNG AND OVERWEIGHT: State improves its health**

December 8, 2005

BY DR. KIMBERLYDAWN WISDOM

During my 20-year career as a practicing emergency medicine physician, I have witnessed far too many patients with serious complications from health conditions they either didn't know they had or had never been taught how to manage.

I have seen people suffering from kidney damage, heart attacks, foot problems resulting in amputation, blindness and other countless complications associated with preventable or uncontrolled conditions. All too often, I've seen the "it won't happen to me" mentality backfire, at the expense of individuals and families alike.

I have seen repeatedly what happens when we fail to take charge of our health. And I have seen the favorable results when we do.

One report after another chronicles our dubious health distinction -- Michigan's Behavioral Risk Factor Survey data clearly illustrate that only 4% of the state's adults engage in all four basic preventive health habits: not smoking, eating sufficient fruits and vegetables, getting 30 minutes of daily physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight.

Even worse, we are now seeing disturbing trends that a generation of unhealthy children and toddlers may be the first not to outlive their parents. Our future civic leaders, business owners, welders, schoolteachers, electricians and scientists deserve a chance at a healthy, productive and full life. They also deserve a healthy state in which to live.

Fortunately, there's still time to improve our vital signs of health in Michigan.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm and the Michigan Department of Community Health are committed to improving our state's health status. We took an important step by creating Michigan Steps Up, an initiative designed to support people in sustaining healthier lifestyles. As a result, Michiganders have access to the information and tools they need to lead a healthier lifestyle, and communities are better equipped to support people in a lifetime of good health.

Michigan citizens are taking small steps toward well-being -- a daily walk, fruit for dessert, a call to a tobacco quitline. In nine months, nearly 10,000 residents have logged on to [www.michiganstepsup.org](http://www.michiganstepsup.org) to create personal plans to improve their lives.

Today, more than 400 organizations also have signed on as Michigan Steps Up stakeholders, committing to work for healthier communities, businesses, schools and faith-based institutions in specific, measurable ways.

Businesses are assessing their environment and policies and making small, low-cost changes to support employee wellness. Religious congregations are learning how to prepare healthier meals for church functions and are implementing smoke-free policies. Schools are finding ways for students to get more physical education and healthier food and beverage choices.

The Legislature has proposed bills to promote physical activity and healthy foods in schools; to encourage smoke-free workplaces, restaurants and bars; and to create insurance premium rebates when employees participate in wellness programs.

All those who believe that public health is a top priority should contact their legislators and ask them to support efforts that improve our collective health status.

Let's seek innovative solutions that support our schools, faith and community groups as they strive toward sustainable health improvement.

Let's support local health departments in their continued efforts to reach vulnerable populations and partner with health care providers who are working to prevent disease, not just cure it.

Let's support businesses of all sizes that invest in strategies to create healthier workplaces. Most of these strategies are far less expensive than spiraling health care claims and lost productivity.

Michigan's health status must improve. With the right combination of personal choice, policy and environmental change, we can send this patient home with a prescription to restore lasting physical, and fiscal, well-being.

*DR. KIMBERLYDAWN WISDOM is a board-certified Emergency Medicine Physician and the state of Michigan's first surgeon general. Write to her in care of the Free Press Editorial Page, 600 W. Fort St., Detroit, MI 48226.*



# More sessions planned on Medicare enrollment

HOMETOWN HEADLINES

GENESEE COUNTY

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Thursday, December 08, 2005

By Shantell M. Kirkendoll

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It's not too late to get help with Medicare prescription benefit enrollment. Dec. 31 is the deadline to sign up for coverage to begin Jan. 1. Seniors have until May to sign up without paying a penalty.

Upcoming sessions are planned by the Michigan Medicaid Medicare Assistance Program from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at selected senior centers.

The counselors have provided free guidance to hundreds of seniors to determine if the prescription benefit is right for them and which drug plan fits their life best.

Appointments must be made in advance by calling:

Flushing: Monday at Flushing Senior Center, (810) 659-4735.

Durand: Tuesday at Durand Senior Center, (989) 288-4122.

Swartz Creek: Wednesday at Swartz Creek Senior Center, (810) 635-4122.

Morrice: 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Dec. 19 at Morrice Senior Center, (517) 625-4270.

Imlay City: 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Dec. 20 at Imlay City Senior Center, 395 E. Third St., (810) 245-5866.

# Legacy of a victim

By Dale Killingbeck, Cadillac News

December 8, 2005

When the little girl's time to enter the world came on July 6, 1981, she struggled for life. The umbilical cord had become wrapped around her neck.

Fourteen years later, the Merritt teenager engaged in the same struggle for life. This time her killer's hands throttled her at a Tustin-area rest stop.

School children from Big Rapids discovered her body, full of knife wounds on May 17, 1996. Dirt and pine needles covered it.

Somewhere in the legacy of Jennifer Marie Gottschalk, who would pen the lines "I absolutely love life" in a poem for school, remains the darkness branded upon her through a sexual assault that marred her life, affected her character and in the end possibly contributed to her death.

Stepfather David Boss was convicted by an Osceola County jury in September for killing her. He was sentenced to life in prison in November. A medical examiner testified Jennifer's eyes and neck showed signs that her murderer tried to choke her.

Testimony by David Boss's sister, Beverly, during the trial depicted David Boss as fearful that Jennifer was pregnant by him. He had been molesting her and told his sister that he was tired of her "blackmail."

On the last night of her life, David Boss told his sister that Jennifer started acting out in a sexual manner as he drove her from Merritt to a Tustin-area rest stop.

"I always felt so bad for her," says Linda Jackson, Osceola County's victim's rights advocate. "We talked a lot."

Jackson became acquainted with Jennifer through a sexual assault case just two years before Jennifer's murder. Osceola County court records show Eric McWethy was sentenced to prison after demanding sex from then 12-year-old Jennifer and another girl in order to join his gang in October 1994.

Gottschalk's mother, La'Denia Boss says through no fault of her own, sex became part of Jennifer's life when she was molested at age 4 by La'Denia Boss's 17-year-old stepbrother.

"She wasn't a kid anymore," her mother says. "From then on everything dealt with sex."

La'Denia Boss says she tried to have her stepbrother charged, but because of his mental problems he never was punished for the crime.

"I asked please if they would put him in counseling, put him in school, get him out of my parent's house."

Instead, nothing was done and so Jennifer grew up going to family gatherings and seeing the relative who did that to her. La'Denia Boss says she believes it made Jennifer believe that kind of behavior was permissible.

Jackson agrees that fits other profiles of sexually abused children.

"Jennifer was a nice girl, but she didn't think as highly of herself as she should have," Jackson says. "She thought that was all she was worth, I think, and it was so not true.

"She liked band and her friends and she would talk about those things," she says. But Jackson also remembers a "sadness" and "loneliness" about the girl.

A University of Michigan Health System document on the university's Web site states there are reasons why molestation victims later act out in a sexual manner.

"They have learned it as a way to please people" or "they may confuse sexual behavior with affection," its experts say.

Both La'Denia Boss and Jackson say Jennifer did not show all the typical signs of a child who suffered sexual abuse. She was outgoing, a good student and liked to write poetry.

"I never had school counselors come to me and say Jen was disturbed," La'Denia Boss says. "She liked writing, she was very good at writing. And she liked music. She wanted to be an actress."

At the time of her murder, the superintendent of Houghton Lake characterized her as a girl with a "warm, friendly, bubbly personality."

Jennifer's early photos show a cute girl. Her father Robert Gottschalk says she drew comments from others about how beautiful she was.

But as she matured early, her mother had to have conversations with her about sex. La'Denia Boss said she found letters in her room written to an older man that were "extremely explicit."

At David Boss' trial, a Missaukee County man testified that he and Jennifer had sexual relations about a week before her death.

La'Denia Boss says she found out her daughter had a "date" with another older man at Merritt Speedway the weekend after her body was found in Tustin.

What can be learned from her life?

Jackson says children like Jennifer tend to "fall through the cracks." A child traumatized by sexual abuse needs help.

Jackson says she does not believe that sexual abuse is happening more frequently than in the past, but it is being reported more often. And scars remain on victims for the rest of their lives.

"When kids finally tell, look what happens to their life," she says. "They are pulled out of their home and they have to talk to a bunch of strangers. They have to talk about things they don't want anyone to know about."

In Jennifer's case, court testimony by a former friend of Jennifer's brother, stated that Jennifer became angry when David Boss came for her as she partied with her girlfriend and others in a trailer the family owned in Reed City. She then announced to all that her stepfather was molesting her.

Shortly after that police were called in, an investigation ensued and then Jennifer recanted.

A letter introduced at the trial that allegedly was found by David Boss' sister in his belongings has Jennifer writing to her mother that she is going to recant to police because "David" was the only father her brother knew. She also writes to her mother that her allegations were true.

The letter shows a young girl battling within and desiring to understand what love really means.

"I'm going to tell the doctor that I was lieing. (sic) If he asks why, I'm going to say because I wanted you and David to know how it felt to be alone. To be unloved.

"All my life I've tried to live up to the dream of being part of an all-American family. Where every one loves everyone. I wanted you and David to see how much it hurts, how it drives you insein (sic)."

La'Denia Boss says she never received the letter and states she was unaware of any sexual relationship between her daughter and David Boss.

"The first time I saw that letter was the preliminary trial when the prosecutor asked me if that was Jennifer's handwriting," La'Denia Boss says.

La'Denia Boss blames much of the problems on her ex-husband Robert Gottschalk, who left the family when Jennifer was just a toddler. She remembers a time when Jennifer kept crying that she “wanted her daddy.”

But she says she feels her own responsibility for the brevity of Jennifer's life.

“I can't blame this all on Bob, because I raised her,” she says, asked to consider what she would have done differently. “I would have stood up for her more and not care what my family thought.”

Following the trial, La'Denia Boss, who initially backed up her ex-husband's claims of innocence in Jennifer's death, believes justice has been done. David Boss' voice on a tape as his sister tried to get him to repeat his confession to killing Jennifer was the final straw.

“I found out in three days a whole lot that I didn't know,” she says. “David can't explain away his voice.”

Jackson says Jennifer's life provides a classic example of hurting children trying to cope with terrible things done to them by adults. Junior high years and puberty represent a tough time.

“So many kids fall through the cracks,” she says. Jackson encourages parents to communicate with their children and pay attention to their behavior.

“You need to pay attention to the signs of your child withdrawing,” she says. “You should know your kids' friends.”

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**Adoptive parent charged with CSC**

By *BRANDON LACIC*  
*Sentinel-Standard editor*

**IONIA** - An Ionia resident who took foster children into his home and adopted several is now charged with sexually molesting three of them.

William Stoakes, 42, was arrested in October on two counts of criminal sexual conduct in the 1st degree, two counts of criminal sexual conduct in the 2nd degree, and one count of furnishing tobacco to a minor. Each CSC 1st degree carries up to life in prison, while each CSC 2nd is a 15-year felony.

Stoakes allegedly molested two adopted daughters, ages 17 and 16, and a third female in his care as a foster child, who is 13.

Seven juveniles were reportedly living with Stoakes and under his guardianship at the time the alleged assaults occurred - his two biological sons, five adopted children and one foster child.

Stoakes is expected to be arraigned on criminal sexual conduct charges in the third case next Tuesday. Currently he has been arraigned on multiple charges stemming from incidents involving the other two girls.

Ionia County Chief Assistant Prosecutor Jessica Wierckz said Stoakes was investigated for allegations of sexual abuse in 2003. Those incidents were investigated by what was the Family Independence Agency. Wierckz did not know if the Ionia County Prosecutor's Office reviewed a report of that investigation, but confirmed Stoakes was not formally charged.

Wierckz said the latest charges are a result of an investigation by the Department of Human Services and that the "allegations were substantiated by (DHS)," in October.

Stoakes has had no contact with his children since his arrest in late October. However, a hearing in Ionia County Probate Court today is expected to decide if the children not involved in the sexual assault case should remain with Stoakes' wife.

Wierckz said there is no evidence Stoakes' wife knew of the alleged abuse prior to an investigation, but believes the wife may now be influencing the children who could be called to testify in the case. She said the defendant has had phone conversations with his wife and the possibility exists that he is telling her to coach the other children on their testimony.

Ionia County Probate Court Judge Robert Sykes Jr. said all adoption documents are sealed, and that he did not preside over an adoption case involving Stoakes during his first year in office.

Wierckz did not know how long Stoakes has been an adoptive parent but assumed it has been several years.

Wierckz said these types of cases are particularly sad because adopted children and the system put a great deal of faith in adoptive parents to raise them in a safe and nurturing environment.

"These are adopted kids who had been abused before, and now they are being abused again - it just makes it that much worse," Wierckz said.

# Mom to be charged in assault on son

Thursday, December 8, 2005

rhall@kalamazoogazette.com 388-7784

A Portage woman who authorities say tried to smother her son Monday following an argument over snow pants was to be arraigned today on an attempted murder charge.

Amy T. Soule, 32, faces up to life in prison if convicted.

Soule called police dispatchers Monday morning from her mother's house in Paw Paw Township and said she needed to see a police officer because ``she had tried to kill her son," said Detective Sgt. Mike Spring of the Michigan State Police.

Soule's 9-year-old son was not injured during the incident, Spring said.

Soule, who lives on West Deadwood Drive in Portage, reportedly had an argument with the boy at about 7:20 a.m. Monday and attempted to discipline him, according to Spring. He ran away from her, but when Soule caught up with the boy, she allegedly placed a pillow over his face for about a minute, the detective said.

Soule then called police, according to Spring. She later told investigators that ``something just snapped," he said.

Soule was jailed on a \$1 million bond this morning. She was expected to be arraigned later today in Van Buren County District Court. The 9-year-old and his infant brother were turned over to family members by the Michigan Department of Human Services, Spring said.

Local News

## **Texas man extradited, faces charges**

By ERICA KOLASKI  
Tribune Staff Writer

A 48-year-old Texas man is facing charges in two Northern Michigan counties after being extradited from Tennessee.

Trooper Mike Jermeay of the Rogers City Post of the Michigan State Police said that James R. Martindale, of Bryan, Texas, has been arrested and charged in connection with using the Internet to commit a crime in Presque Isle County and five counts of third-degree criminal sexual conduct in Cheboygan County.

Jermeay said that in January of 2004, Martindale, an interstate truck driver, entered a chat room on the Internet and began conversations with a 14-year-old female.

Martindale ultimately drove to Onaway, where he met with the teen and reportedly had a sexual relationship with her.

Jermeay said that Martindale was extradited from Tennessee and lodged in the Presque Isle County Jail. He is set to appear in court again on Tuesday.

Using the Internet to commit a crime is a felony punishable by up to 15 years in prison. Criminal sexual conduct is also a felony punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

Bond for Martindale was set at \$10,000 cash in Presque Isle County and for \$100,000 cash in Cheboygan County



# **Bus Driver Suspended After Child Left Behind**

## ***5-Year-Old Boy Reportedly Fell Asleep***

POSTED: 3:50 pm EST December 7, 2005

A school bus driver in Hazel Park has been suspended after a child was left on a bus.

A 5-year-old boy who attends Roosevelt Early Childhood Center -- located at 24131 S. Chrysler Drive -- was left on a bus Nov. 29 when he fell asleep, according to Local 4. The driver failed to check that all students were let off at the school, Local 4 reported.

The driver was not feeling well that day and neglected to check his bus, according to a report in *The Oakland Press*.

When the boy awoke from his sleep, he got off the bus and wandered toward the Interstate 75 service drive, Local 4 reported.

The boy's parents are planning to file a lawsuit against the Hazel Park school district, according to their attorney, Shawn Patrick Smith.

The school district's transportation department recently implemented the use of checklists for drivers to account for all students, according to the paper's report.

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Thursday, December 8, 2005

The Detroit News

Good deeds: Celebrating unsung heroes

## **Rochester volunteer works to reunite families**

### **She spends more time at Pontiac's Child Abuse and Neglect Council than at her dental hygienist job.**

Jon Zemke / Special to The Detroit News

**ROCHESTER** -- Ramona Marshall is looking for something special when she volunteers at the Child Abuse and Neglect Council for Oakland County.

It's one of the main reasons the Rochester resident puts in so many hours there.

"Just to see the smile on their (the children's) faces return," Marshall said. "Not only the child, but the parents as well."

Child Abuse and Neglect Council for Oakland County is an advocate for the safety of children. It's a leading resource in the prevention of child abuse and the protection of children through education, intervention, treatment and research, while working with the community.

Marshall, a 48-year-old dental hygienist, volunteers about six hours a week at the council's headquarters in Pontiac; she also does work for it at home. She works in the council's child assist and child advocacy programs.

The child assist program comforts children who are coming to the council for help. They supply everything from games and puzzles to computers and video games.

"We make sure the child is comfortable," Marshall said. "We get them comfortable before they have to meet with a crisis counselor. It's just a wonderful experience. The kids are really receptive. We've even had some who said they would rather stay with us sometimes."

The child advocacy program helps mediate resolution between children and parents who are experiencing problems.

Most of this work is done through counseling.

"We work with the entire family in regards to therapy and making sure the child's best interests are taken care of," Marshall said. "Reunification of the family is our main goal."

Marshall began volunteering at the council after a family member had to utilize it.

She was so impressed with the facilities that she began donating her time and resources to it.

"Ramona is a very caring, a very energetic and a very personal person," said Charles Ludwig, the director of advocacy and prevention for the council. "She has the ability to put people at ease with her style."

Marshall describes the staff and facilities at the council as "absolutely fantastic." It makes it that much easier for her to volunteer her time there.

"I spend more time there than I do at my real job," Marshall said. "It's well worth it. It does my heart good."

Contact us

Send us your good deeds in 150 words or less, and we'll publish them each Thursday.

E-mail us at

[gooddeeds@detnews.com](mailto:gooddeeds@detnews.com)

Write to The Detroit News, Good Deeds, c/o Metro Desk, 615 W. Lafayette Blvd., Detroit, MI 48226. Please leave a daytime phone number.

# Refugee program ending after three decades

Thursday, December 08, 2005

By Ted Roelofs  
The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- On an April morning 30 years ago, Luan Vo scrambled aboard a small boat with six relatives and fled the chaos of Vietnam ahead of the communist victory.

Several desperate countrymen spilled off the jammed vessel as it pulled away from shore.

"It was a blessing to get out. A lot of people didn't make it," he recalled.

Vo, 55, found a new life in West Michigan with help from a fledgling refugee program run by Catholic Human Development Outreach -- one he is saddened to learn will close by year's end.

"It's bad that they shut down the program. For 30 years, they help a lot of people," Vo said.

In the decades since the program began in 1975, it has settled 12,000 refugees from around the globe even as it altered the face of West Michigan. In addition to thousands of Vietnamese, the community is home to sizable numbers of Bosnians, Sudanese and a virtual United Nations of other nationalities.

Robert Enders, the agency's interim executive director, said it was a "very difficult decision" to end the program.

Enders said the number of refugees it resettled plunged in the years after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, as authorities clamped down on immigration.

The agency helped 475 refugees in 2001, a total that fell to 154 in 2002 and 135 this year.

Meanwhile, the government has reduced the amount it pays per refugee from \$4,000 to \$3,100.

That left the program with deficits that averaged more than \$100,000 over the past three years, Enders said.

"We have been trying to find ways to fill that gap, but we haven't been successful," he said. "We don't have the discretionary funds to support that."

The closing leaves resettlement to two other nonprofit agencies: Lutheran Social Services of Michigan and Bethany Christian Services.

Cheryl Jones, coordinator for the West Michigan resettlement program of Lutheran Social Services, said she was "confident" the two programs would fill the void.

"We are sorry to see them go. They were a great resource to the community," Jones said.

She said the Lutheran program's refugee numbers also have fallen, from 150 in 2004 to 60 this year.

Carol Russo, the Catholic program's former program manager, found it hard to believe it was coming to an end.

"I wish I could stop it. I wish I could keep it open," she said.

Russo helped the first wave of Vietnamese refugees who landed here after the fall of Saigon.

In the years to come, the program's arrivals were a virtual road map to the world's most-troubled spots.

Civil war in Africa brought us "The Lost Boys" of Sudan and refugees from several other African nations. The splintering of Yugoslavia sent thousands of Bosnians. Smaller numbers of Albanians arrived in the wake of Kosovo's ethnic cleansing.

In 2001, Sudanese native William Deng arrived in Grand Rapids, one of several hundred Lost Boys who settled here the past four years.

Deng, 26, recalled how frightening it was at first. Catholic Human Development Outreach, with lots of church and volunteer help, eased the transition, he said. He now has an apartment and a job as a nurse at Spectrum Health Butterworth Campus.

"When I came here I didn't know anything about the United States," Deng said. "I didn't how to drive. They helped me learn to drive. They taught me how to make my own food and how to pay my rent."

Deng said he and the others quickly learned America was not the land where everything was free.

"This is the land of America, but you work for it. We see that there is a lot of benefit, but you work for it," he said.

That is a lesson Luan Vo learned quickly.

Within weeks of his arrival, the Wyoming resident got a job at a local carpet factory. Thirty years and two owners later, Vo works for the same operation, now called Scott Group, in Cascade Township.

"I'm not afraid to work. I work very hard for me, for my family," said Vo, a production supervisor.

Vo considers himself blessed for the opportunities he discovered here. He and his wife, Thu-Van Nguyen, and their daughter, Phuong-Vy Vo, live in a two-story home the couple bought four years ago. They live in a nice neighborhood.

His eyes grew moist as he talked about the past 30 years.

"America -- to have a permission to live in this nice country, this beautiful country -- we feel very lucky," he said.

# First, House the Poor

The Washington Post

Thursday, December 8, 2005; Page A32

GIVE IT A FEW months, and the term "workforce housing," like its precursor "affordable housing," will start to take on a faintly disreputable flavor in neighborhoods where the affluence of households is closely bound up with soaring property values. No matter what term is in vogue, it is code for the same thing: subsidized homes for people who couldn't otherwise afford to live in them. And no matter what practical or social arguments are advanced, most people do not want the government to earmark their neighborhood as a refuge for relatively poorer people. In the Washington area, as in San Francisco, Boston and a few other places, what distinguishes the word "workforce" is that it may encompass solidly middle-class people priced out of the local housing market by gravity-defying prices. Too poor to buy a townhouse or apartment but too rich to qualify for traditional affordable-housing programs, they feel cheated out of the American dream's promise of homeownership; unsurprisingly, local politicians are eager to help them. One bill in Montgomery County, proposed by County Council member Steven A. Silverman (D-At Large), would require developers of projects near Metro stations to provide a certain number of below-market apartments to homebuyers earning up to 20 percent more than the area's median income; by that formula, a family of four making \$107,000 could qualify for the county's help in affording an apartment.

If that sounds over the top, it probably is. As they head toward an election year, Mr. Silverman, a candidate for county executive, and other council members in Montgomery may see votes in easing the dwelling dilemmas of frustrated house hunters. They can hardly be blamed for wanting to help their constituents, and such a policy may well be justified in cases involving recruitment of public employees -- teachers, firefighters, police officers -- who might otherwise not take a job in the county. But as broader social policy, it is problematic. After all, Montgomery has plenty of actual poor people whose salaries are way, way below the area's median income. If the county is in the business of providing a social safety net, the struggling poor, not the wistful middle class, should be the priority and the focus of new housing initiatives. Admittedly, there is a growing disconnect between area housing prices and the bankbooks of large numbers of middle-class families. The squeeze those families feel is very real. But in recent years it is the poor who have been given the cold shoulder by the federal government's increasing indifference to housing programs. Before it concentrates on constituents in the upper levels of eligibility, local government should watch out for the neediest and most vulnerable citizens.

## COURT LIFTS PARENTING RIGHTS OF HUSBAND

A conflicted ruling by a trial court in a battle between two men seeking to establish parenting time has left a divorced man who has been making support payments without parental rights under a Court of Appeals ruling released Wednesday. But the 2-1 majority returned the case back to the trial court where the parenting rights could be re-established.

The court said the Arenac Circuit Court misunderstood the law when it granted parenting rights to Dennis Killingbeck – who was determined in tests following the divorce to not have been the biological father – but revoked the acknowledgment of parenthood he signed in an attempt to establish rights under the Child Custody Act. The man had been acting as the de facto father in the four years between his birth, which occurred three years prior to the marriage, and the beginning of the court case.

Judges Richard Bandstra and Kirsten Frank Kelly said the revocation by the trial court of the acknowledgment of parenthood meant Mr. Killingbeck could not be granted parenting time (*Killingbeck v. Killingbeck*, COA docket No. 258358). It also rejected a variety of arguments by the biological father, Tony Rosebrugh, who has maintained a relationship with the mother, to be given parenting time.

The court ordered the trial court to reconsider the revocation order in light of its impact on the issue of parenting time. “The record here evidences the trial court’s conclusion that, notwithstanding the repeated protestations of plaintiff and Rosebrugh, the equities of this case justified Killingbeck’s continuing right to parenting time,” the court said.

The Court of Appeals said Mr. Killingbeck had no parental rights under either the equitable estoppel doctrine – generally barring husbands from denying paternity which the Supreme Court said does not extend to children born outside the context of marriage – or the equitable parent doctrine – which the Supreme Court ruled applies only to children born during a marriage.

Judge Jessica Cooper said the majority produced an illogical result that could require the biological father to be legally responsible for the child yet have no rights of visitation, or preclude Mr. Killingbeck from seeking visitation of the child he raised for four years.

In her partial dissent, she would have only reversed the order revoking the acknowledgment of parenthood, while affirming decisions to grant parenting time to the biological father and recognize the right of Mr. Killingbeck to continue to be parent to the now seven-year-old child.

# House votes to ban felons from being hired for adult foster care

12/6/2005, 7:06 p.m. ET

The Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — People who have been convicted of a felony or a violent misdemeanor could not be hired for jobs that would give them access to residents of mental health facilities and adult foster homes under legislation approved Tuesday by the state House. Other bills in the package also would require adult foster care and psychiatric facilities to request that the Michigan State Police conduct a criminal background check on prospective employees. The four-bill package now goes to the Senate.

Under the legislation, Michigan would have access to \$5 million in federal funds for the background checks.

The bills would allow job applicants convicted of a felony or a violent misdemeanor, such as neglect, abuse or criminal sexual conduct, to be eligible for employment 10 to 15 years after serving their sentence if they have stayed out of trouble with the law.

Employees or independent contractors who have been convicted of a felony or violent misdemeanor also could not have access to the medical files of vulnerable adults under the legislation.

"Raising the bar for employees will increase our abilities to provide the security and protection of the individuals seeking help from these facilities," said Rep. Gary Newell, a Saranac Republican who sponsored one of the bills in the package.

The House voted 102-3 to approve the two bills that would prohibit felons or people convicted of a violent misdemeanor from being hired as an employee or an independent contractor of a home for vulnerable adults. The "no" votes came from Republican Reps. Leon Drolet of Macomb County's Clinton Township, John Garfield of Rochester and Jack Hoogendyk of Portage.

The three Republicans also voted against the bill that would amend the public health code to require background checks on new employees of a health facility or agency.

Garfield and Drolet voted against the bill that would require background checks to be done on those seeking a license or registration for a health occupation, but Hoogendyk voted for it.



December 6, 2005

## **Debit cards to replace checks for jobless State touts convenience for recipients, \$1.8 million savings for state**

By Mary Beth Schneider  
[mary.beth.schneider@IndyStar.com](mailto:mary.beth.schneider@IndyStar.com)

Unemployment and child support checks will be replaced by debit cards sometime next spring, saving hundreds of thousands of recipients time and the state money, the Indiana Department of Workforce Development announced Monday.

Indiana would become the first state in the nation to exclusively use prepaid cards for unemployment benefits, saving at least \$1.8 million a year in postage and administrative costs, the state said.

Under the program:

A bank-issued card -- either Visa or MasterCard -- would be issued to people receiving unemployment compensation or child support.

People could use the cards to pay for goods anywhere that accepts Visa or MasterCard.

They would also be allowed one free ATM transaction per week to access all or part of their funds. Four additional weekly ATM transactions would be allowed for a fee.

Last year, 3.3 million unemployment payments went to more than 263,000 recipients, according to the workforce development department.

"This is a win-win situation for recipients of unemployment benefits as well as taxpayers," Ron Stiver, commissioner of the department, said in a statement. He noted another benefit: Recipients would be able to avoid "outrageous check-cashing fees."

The state is seeking a vendor, which will not be allowed to charge the state for processing transactions and will be required to develop a program to educate Hoosiers on how to use the cards.

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# **OASIS counselor: Domestic abuse can happen to anyone**

By Tanya Berkebile, Cadillac News

December 8, 2005

CADILLAC - In light of some recent local domestic violence situations, it is important for people to know that it can and does happen. It is also important to know what signs to look for and how to deal with the situation if it arises.

According to OASIS counselor Deb Bauman, statistically this is not the most prevalent time of year for these situations to happen.

"You really don't see a spike around the holiday season, although it is a stressful time," she said. "From my experience, I see that families tend to pull together around the holidays. That isn't to say it doesn't happen, though."

Bauman said it is important for people to know what to look for if someone thinks they could be in a violent situation.

"There are many signs someone can look for if they think they are in that type of relationship or situation," she said. "We have a pamphlet with questions that people can answer to see if they fit the profile."

If someone can answer yes to one or more of these questions, they may be or could face a domestic violence situation:

Do you feel like you must walk on eggshells to avoid making your partner mad?

Does your partner cut you down, make you feel bad or embarrass you in front of others?

Are you afraid that if you left your partner, you'd be spied on, harassed or attacked?

Has your partner threatened your family, friends or pets?

Has your partner pushed, hit, choked or physically hurt you in any other way?

Has your partner forced you with unwanted sexual contact?

If a person answered yes to any of these questions, Bauman said it is important to receive help.

"No one should have to be involved in any of these scenarios," she said. "If you are in any of these situations, there is help available and it is important to get help."

Bauman said safety is always first. If someone is in an unsafe situation, the best thing to do is contact the sheriff's department or call 911.

"It is important to contact someone because these problems usually escalate," she said. "Ninety percent of the time the person can make a phone call once the partner goes to sleep or leaves."

Crisis lines also are available. The local number is 775-7233 and the national domestic abuse hotline is (800) 775-4646.

"It happens in all professions, the wealthy and the poor," she said. "No one group is more or less vulnerable."

### **Your connection**

Domestic violence is pervasive in Michigan and across the nation. The following statistics on domestic violence were released by the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence with information gathered through a survey:

€ From October 2003 to September 2004, domestic violence programs in Michigan received 55,208 crisis calls, an average of 151 crisis calls per day

€ One out of five, or 21 percent, of Michigan women with current partners reported sustaining some type of violence in that relationship

€ Women experience higher rates than men of both fatal and non-fatal violence by an intimate partner

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Michigan

## **Tax-cut chance linked to aid**

### **Granholt doesn't commit to bills**

December 8, 2005

BY CHRIS CHRISTOFF and RUBY L. BAILEY  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITERS

Gov. Jennifer Granholm said all bets could be off.

LANSING -- Gov. Jennifer Granholm said Wednesday that "all bets are off" for cutting Michigan business taxes if Congress slashes an estimated \$1 billion in aid over five years to Michigan for Medicaid and other programs that help needy families, students and farmers.

"If we get \$1 billion in cuts, those legislators in Washington need to know that tax cuts for manufacturers cannot be afforded," Granholm told reporters.

She said that includes legislation the House passed Wednesday to cut business taxes by more than \$500 million over four years, beginning Jan. 1, 2006. The eight-bill package would reduce personal property taxes, which largely affects manufacturers.

The bills are a second attempt at compromise between the Republican-led Legislature and Democrat Granholm on business tax cuts since Granholm vetoed a package of similar tax cuts two weeks ago.

The House bills go to the Senate for approval.

In Washington, leaders in both parties have questioned whether they'll reach agreement on reductions in aid before their scheduled Dec. 16 recess. That means the state tax cuts could land on Granholm's desk before Congress acts to cut aid to Michigan and other states. Granholm spoke favorably of the bills Wednesday but did not commit to signing them.

She said she would oppose further business tax cuts if the congressional reductions occur in 2006.

She said Michigan taxes overall are "in the middle of the pack" among states and that she would oppose business tax reforms that would shift taxes to individuals, such as a higher sales tax.

House Republican spokesman Matt Resch said the state should cut business taxes regardless of federal budget issues.

"It unfortunately signals that the governor is looking for an excuse to not sign very important tax relief," Resch said. "I hope she doesn't let the action, or inaction, of Washington stand in the way of tax relief Michigan desperately needs."

Ari Adler, spokesman for Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema, agreed, saying federal aid reductions shouldn't deter the state from pursuing tax cuts to boost Michigan's economy.

"The No. 1 issue facing this state is economic recovery, not the state budget," Adler said. "If you can get Michigan's economy rolling again, you won't have a budget problem because you'll have people working again."

Granholm's spokesperson, Liz Boyd, said the governor wants to make the business cuts "but not at the expense of having citizens pay more and endure cuts in education and health care."

Congress is considering a \$50-billion cut in aid to states for Medicaid, food stamps, farmers, child support enforcement and student loans to help pay for recovery efforts for Hurricane Katrina's damage and the rising cost of the Iraq war.

The U.S. Senate already has passed spending cuts of \$35 billion, and the House is calling for deeper reductions.

Critics say the federal government is attempting to erase deficits by hurting those who need government help the most. Michigan social services officials say cuts in child support efforts would result in more families being forced to rely on government assistance.

Supporters of federal cutbacks say it is time the government scales back costly social programs, and that the reductions are actually limits on spending increases.

Granholm said state lawmakers should reconsider her proposal last February that would cut taxes largely for manufacturers, who are suffering most in Michigan's struggling economy, but raise taxes on insurance companies and other financial businesses that are doing well.

*Contact CHRIS CHRISTOFF at 517-372-8660 or [christoff@freepress.com](mailto:christoff@freepress.com).*

## Poor are 'generous'

The Dec. 1 LSJ reported on the latest legislative effort to cut welfare benefits. It confirms the unanimity of Republican members of the Legislature with their Scrooge-like Republican counterparts in Congress.

These unending efforts are especially noteworthy at Christmas time, for such cuts are really a gift to the rest of us. Coming as they do, they make less likely the need for tax increases or other program cuts. These are gifts we can always count on in our time of need. Truly, the poor are the gift that keeps on giving!

Thanks, legislators. Oh, by the way, do you ever think of cutting your own benefits?

**Grant Parker**  
Perry

# Meals on Wheels revised for more variety and taste

By ERIN VER BERKMOES / Niles Daily Star

*Thursday, December 8, 2005 11:51 AM EST*

NILES - In order to give their customers a greater variety, the Niles-Buchanan Meals on Wheels program went through a two-month process of revising its menu and rolled out the finished product on Nov. 14.

"We took into consideration the nutritional value, caloric value and the ability to chew and digest the food and included tastes of a large number of participants when choosing the new menu," said Cathy Doroh, nutrition services manager, at Lakeland Regional Health System, Niles.

For \$5 a day, residents of Niles and Buchanan can receive one hot and one cold meal delivered to their home Monday through Friday by a Meals on Wheels driver. Those who receive the meals are usually older residents who aren't able to get out much and often have trouble cooking for themselves.

The previous Meals on Wheels menu was designed to rotate on a two-week schedule. With the revisions, the menu is now on a four-week rotation schedule, meaning customers are able to get a wider variety of meals.

"With a four-week cycle, we can provide them with a better selection of home-cooked meals," Doroh said.

"The way in which the program was being run, with what meals were being offered, it wasn't cost effective. We would have either been forced to raise the cost of the meals or not been able to offer the Meals on Wheels program," said Armin Schleiffarth, Meals on Wheels coordinator.

The Meals on Wheels Program at Lakeland Hospital serves about 70 customers in the Niles and Buchanan area.

Customers are able to get one of two meal choices. There is a general meal and then there is one for diabetics.

"The only real difference between the two meals is the dessert and the type of milk in which they receive," Schleiffarth said. "We also increased the number milks they were getting from one pint to two."

Another item which has switched for the Meals on Wheels program is the container in which the food is delivered.

"We now package our meals in a package similar to those restaurants use. It's a foil base with a cardboard top. The new packages are better for heat retention in the food and the customers are now receiving their meals hotter than before," Doroh said. "I think what sets us apart from other programs such as this is that our food is made fresh each day right here in the hospital cafeteria, put in the packages and then delivered to the customers."

Doroh and Schleiffarth said the Meals on Wheels program is always looking for volunteer drivers to deliver meals.

“Most people drive for us once a month but others will drive more often. We also need substitute drivers for when our regular ones aren't able to make it in due to the weather or illness,” Schleiffarth said. “The time commitment is about an hour to an hour and a half, with 15 meals being on each route.”

The program is also available to take new clients for meal delivery.

Anyone interested in either getting a meal or becoming a driver can call the Meals on Wheels office at (269) 687-1462.



# **Board honors Ribner for turkey giveaway**

HOMETOWN HEADLINES

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Thursday, December 08, 2005

By Matt Bach

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The Flint Board of Education honored retired teacher John Ribner on Wednesday for a program he started that gives free turkeys to needy Flint families.

The board gave Ribner a plaque Wednesday recognizing his volunteer work over the years. This year Ribner and his Captain Coty's Family Restaurant gave away 835 turkeys to students from 11 Flint schools for Thanksgiving. The giveaway was made possible through \$7,000 in donations given by about 50 Genesee County businesses, Ribner has said.

# Salvation Army kettles aren't as full this season

By Christy Strawser

Royal Oak Daily Tribune Staff Writer

PUBLISHED: December 7, 2005

ROYAL OAK — 'Tis the season when work never ends for the Salvation Army in Royal Oak.

Staffers held a Christmas luncheon for more than 200 senior citizens on Monday in the gymnasium of the Royal Oak Citadel, a second lunch for 300 seniors on Tuesday and orchestrated yet another special holiday meal, this one focused on 250 local disabled people, on Tuesday night. Volunteers and staff members are readying holiday meal baskets this week in anticipation of delivering them before Christmas and so far there has been enough to go around — but Major Glen Caddy noted that during the last six days the annual bell ringing campaign has fallen below last year's totals.

"There's still time for it to pick up," Caddy said, but at the same time that donations appear to be lagging there are roughly 50 new families every week that ask the Salvation Army in Royal Oak for help.

The Salvation is pulling out all the stops to get donations into its little red kettles, which represent the Army's single largest annual fund-raiser. TV personalities from WXYZ (Channel 7) news will ring the bells outside Holiday Market in Royal Oak this week to drum up some attention.

And Caddy said Swin Cash from the Detroit Shock volunteered to work in the Salvation Army's Toy Shop on Dec. 19.

The Salvation Army in southeast Michigan hopes to raise \$7 million with its Red Kettle Campaign this holiday season.

And they hope to get a big boost from Give A Christmas Year Around, which counts the Salvation Army among nine core charities that receive funds every year.

Give A Christmas is just starting up the long hill toward its \$80,000 fund-raising goal. Donations to this year's campaign will help homeless kids go to class with warm coats and new supplies, disabled adults get job training, give homeless people warm meals and a solid roof for the night, foster children find loving homes and battered women get safe haven.

The Judson Center, HAVEN, Troy People Concerned, the South Oakland Shelter, Community Services of Oakland, the Boys and Girls Club of South Oakland County, South Oakland YMCA, Common Ground Sanctuary and the Salvation Army all benefit from Give A Christmas — and there's usually a little left over to help another deserving charity or two.

Give-A-Christmas organizations are all local agencies that help people in this area. Since there are no administrative costs, donations go to the people who need it most.

We would be happy to announce your contributions, along with your city of residence and a greeting or memory.

Checks should be made to "Give-A-Christmas Year Around" and sent to:

Give-A-Christmas

c/o Daily Tribune

210 E. Third Street

Royal Oak, MI 48067

Until the end of the year, we'll bring readers stories of Give-A-Christmas' generous donors, along with the agencies and people helped by the charity.

Recent contributions include:

Ladies Auxiliary of L.A.C. Masonic Lodge No. 551, \$100: "Merry Christmas."

Roger Kirk, Royal Oak, \$50.

Frank and Barb Neff, Royal Oak, \$50: "Merry 4th Christmas to our granddaughter, Tori Rose. Love, Grammie and Grampa."

Royal Oak Court 14 Order of Amaranth, \$30.

Escanaba Daily Press

December 8, 2005

## **Bell Ringers Hoping for More Holiday Generosity**

ESCANABA - Residents looking for simple ways to give can get involved in this year's Salvation Army collection drive. The annual bell-ringing kettle collection drive is already in full swing, and the Army is seeking volunteers and donations.

"There is a feeling that comes with giving that can't be matched," said Maj. Bill Cox. "Giving brings joy."

Traditionally, most bellringers are volunteers. This year, though, without enough volunteers, the organization had to hire many bellringers. The money donated so far this year (\$35,000) has been "about even with last year," Cox said. This year, though, the Salvation Army needs to raise more money than last year.

This year's \$150,000 minimum goal "is conservative," Cox said. "We really need more to meet the needs in this community. The need is much greater than last year. Fuel is up. Utility costs are up. A dollar doesn't go as far as it did last year."

# United Way misses goal

By: Paula Wethington  
Monroe News

Story updated December 08, 2005 11:47AM

Officials announced Wednesday that the campaign reached 94 percent of its goal, a slight improvement over last year.

LaSALLE — The 2005 United Way of Monroe County campaign efforts fell short of the goal, but organizers remain encouraged by the efforts.

Officials announced Wednesday that the campaign reached 94 percent of its goal, a slight improvement over last year. And, given a series of unexpected challenges this fall, campaign team leaders said they appreciate the pledges and donations that did come in.

The United Way held its Achievement Dinner Wednesday at LaRoy's Hall in LaSalle. This event formally concludes and celebrates the campaign season, which started Sept. 13.

This year, the staff and volunteers raised \$1,657,938, or 94 percent of the goal of \$1,761,000. The 2004 campaign had the same goal but raised \$1,651,511.

Coming up short is a familiar situation for the local United Way. During the past several years, only the 1999 and 2003 campaigns reached the set goals.

But as executive director Michael D. Hoydic told the crowd of about 150 people, the focus is "what we do with the money." During early 2006, the allocation committee members will meet to review the grant requests from member agencies and decide how much of the funds will go to various programs and services that help local residents.

The problem with struggling campaigns, Mr. Hoydic added, is that the donations don't go as far as they used to. With the cost of living going up, the same amount of money will, in the long run, help fewer local residents.

United Way leaders knew that it would be difficult to collect money when so many people in Southeast Michigan have been struggling financially this year.

"The economy is in tough shape," said Ray Sullivan, 2005 Labor Campaign Chair. "We need to get people jobs and back to work."

But nobody knew when the campaign started that Hurricane Katrina would also divert attention from other charitable needs. Campaign chairman Donald Spencer said the United Way broke with tradition and allowed some agencies to conduct independent fundraising efforts during the fall - historically a time to focus on the United Way campaign - because the needs were so great from the national disaster.

"I was struck by the adversity we had to contend with," he said.

Mr. Spencer hoped, and was proven correct, that Monroe County residents would continue to show their support for local families, children and senior citizens. The dedication both from his committee members and the local residents is what helped the campaign do as well as possible.

"I was very optimistic," he said. "United Way is the best way to make our community better."

Mr. Spencer's vice chairman, Dr. David Nixon, president of Monroe County Community College, will lead the 2006 campaign.

This year's theme was "Building the Future, Leaving a Legacy." The Achievement Dinner menu was dubbed a "working man's dinner" with foods such as meat loaf and apple pie. Toy construction hats, bolts and levels were among the table decorations. Several campaign team members wore red work shirts that featured the United Way logo.

As the team members announced their district and professional committee efforts, each one placed a cardboard box into a pile as a child would build a tower from blocks.

The brightest spots in the campaign were from the Youth Division, which works with the student-related fundraisers; and the Special Events committee; both of which saw donations and proceeds way over their goals.

The district campaign efforts were reported as follows:

n Airport: Goal of \$28,365; raised \$29,723 or 105 percent of goal.

n Bedford-Whiteford: Goal of \$22,900; raised \$23,988 or 105 percent of goal.

n Dundee-Summerfield: Goal of \$109,700; raised \$110,783 or 101 percent of goal.

n Ida: Goal of \$4,800; raised \$4,937 or 103 percent of goal.

n Jefferson: Goal of \$346,350; raised \$269,839 or 78 percent of goal.

n Mason: Goal of 425,800; raised \$26,782 or 104 percent of goal.

n Monroe: Goal of \$781,935; raised \$747,105 or 96 percent of goal.

n Special events: Goal of \$12,000; raised \$17,176 or 143 percent of goal.

n Public education: Goal of \$94,500; raised \$88,490 or 94 percent of goal.

n Youth: Goal of \$2,650; raised \$4,298 or 162 percent of goal. (This amount will be updated to about \$5,100 once late reports are included).

n Attorneys: Goal of \$5,000; raised \$5,280 or 106 percent of goal.

n Doctors and medical: Goal of \$15,000; raised \$17,405 or 116 percent of goal.

n Out-of-Monroe County (Donations from local residents who work in other communities): Goal of \$310,000; raised \$310,265 or 110 percent of goal.

n Street donations: Goal of \$2,000; raised \$1,867 or 93 percent of goal.

n Total campaign effort: Goal of \$1,761,000; raised \$1,657,938 or 94 percent of goal. (This does not include the late Youth Division reports).

# Area 'heroes' help children shop for Christmas

Kelly Nankervis, Midland Daily News

12/08/2005

MidMichigan EMS paramedic Ann Budinski of Sanford helps Rebekah Gary, 11, of Sanford pick out toys as they try to spend a \$100 gift card during Shop With A Hero. After spending \$60 on her family, Rebekah spent the remainder of the money on herself. Moments of indecision led her to be the last of the children to finish her shopping spree.

The aisles of Meijer were teeming with children and their uniformed heroes shopping for holiday gifts on Wednesday night.

Invited this year to participate in Shop with a Hero were about 30 children chosen by the Salvation Army, along with police officers and firefighters from the City of Midland, Midland County Sheriff's deputies, Mills Township volunteer firefighters, and MidMichigan Medical Center Emergency Medical Services paramedics. Each of the children was given a \$100 gift certificate with the help of the store, at 7300 Eastman Ave., and vendors.

One of first to find a hero and start shopping was Catherine Millard, 8, who attends third grade at Meridian Elementary. She chose to shop with Candy Sue Goodell, from the Mills department.

Catherine had a list of items to buy for family members, and zigzagged from one department to the next, with Goodell using a small notebook to keep track of how much money was spent.

"Oh, these are cute," Catherine said, picking items off a rack before rolling the cart toward the next display. "My mom would love these."

She grabbed another item on the fly, not stopping her cart as she passed the shelf, looking the pink and sparkly item over before dropping it in the cart's basket.

"Oh, I need some wrap too, I forgot," she chattered as she passed another display. Goodell followed, smiling the whole way.

"It's like she scoped things out," before shopping, Goodell said, laughing.

Goodell's strategy of rounding up a little when keeping track of the money helped out at the checkout, allowing Catherine to pick out three pieces of candy before the total reached \$99.69.

Also out to help was Sheriff Jerry Nielsen, who escorted 8-year-old Alex Schreck, a Longview Elementary third-grader.

"Ah ha! It looks like we hit the jackpot, buddy," Nielsen exclaimed when they found an item on Alex's list.

The list – typed – was made with help from his mother, Alex said. At the bottom was a special note: "Alex: NO MORE THAN \$10 GIFT!!!," which he stuck to, purchasing a 12-pack of Pepsi for himself.

He still had enough money to get a present for his teacher, an idea suggested by Nielsen.

After the children were done shopping, they were treated to pizza and pop, and mingled a bit with the law enforcement officers, firefighters and paramedics. It turned out there were so many heroes who came, some didn't even get to shop.

This is the first year Mills firefighters were at the event.

"We've always wanted to do it," Goodell said.



# Old Newsboys to sell papers Friday

HOMETOWN HEADLINES

GENESEE COUNTY

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Thursday, December 08, 2005

By Kristin Longley

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From daybreak until dusk on Friday, the Old Newsboys of Flint will be on street corners and store fronts all over the county selling Old Newsboys papers.

The major, one-day event is the main source of funding for the organization, which helps families provide for their children during the holidays.

About 350 people will be selling the papers and asking for donations, said Laurie Goff, executive director. She said this year's fundraiser is especially important because the number of families in need is higher than in past years.

"These families are having to make decisions whether their child will have a coat or a meal," she said. "This is how we provide for those children."

# Sanctuary store serving as Toys for Tots dropoff location

December 8, 2005

By SARA ROBINSON  
Alpena News Staff Writer

While Christmas is the most joyous time of the year for most, it can be a difficult time for those who are less fortunate. And it can be especially hard for young children who will see little under the Christmas tree on Christmas morning.

The U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program gives residents the opportunity to share a bit of holiday cheer with needy children in the area.

Through the Toys for Tots program, donated toys are distributed to qualifying children in the community.

In the Alpena area, the Toys for Tots dropoff location is located at the sanctuary store in the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center.

Sanctuary Store Manager Peggy Allen said the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve chose to participate in the program because of a desire to give back to the community.

"We have a new, beautiful building and we wanted to help out the community that's been supportive of us," Allen said.

Allen said toy collection began Monday and will continue until Dec. 20, after which time toys will be distributed to families in the community.

Those who want to donate to the program can bring an unwrapped toy to the Sanctuary Store.

Allen said educational toys such as books, games or activities are preferable.

"They're looking for the easy to use, not too gender-specific (toys), so that everyone can have something," she said.

She said those who donate toys should refrain from buying toys that need additional parts or accessories.

Gifts can be dropped off from Monday through Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday from 12 to 4 p.m.

Those who would like to have toys donated to a specific child can contact the nearest program coordinator. Coordinators are listed on [www.toysfortots.org](http://www.toysfortots.org), and can be located by clicking on "Toy Drive in Your Community" and then selecting the appropriate state.

*Sara Robinson can be reached via e-mail at [srobinson@thealpenanews.com](mailto:srobinson@thealpenanews.com) or by phone at 354-3111 ext. 316.*

December 7, 2005

## **TC fire officials collecting toys**

FROM RECORD EAGLE STAFF REPORTS

TRAVERSE CITY - City fire officials are continuing their annual tradition of collecting toys for needy children throughout Grand Traverse County.

New, unwrapped toys can be dropped off at the city's two fire stations at 500 West Front Street and 1313 E. 8th Street.

Last year, the department collected and distributed more than 1,200 toys for area children in need.

The public is welcome to join fire officials on Dec. 18 beginning at 8 a.m. to sort and wrap toys. Lunch is provided.

For more information, call the fire department at 922-4930.

## LAKE COUNTY STAR

Thursday, Dec. 1, 2005

# Christmas giving helps Lake County kids and seniors

BALDWIN — Thanks to volunteers, Lake County youngsters will be warmer for the holiday. Barbara Graham of Rockford knitted 200 hats to warm the heads of Lake County youth. Gwen Shelly of Rochester Hills gave 156 pairs of mittens. Dollar General shared 75 pairs of gloves, 30 hats and 23 candy filled candy canes. St Adelbert's Catholic Basilica will bring up toys and clothing from Grand Rapids. All of these donations will be shared with 550 low income children the second week of December in Luther.

Volunteers from the community, churches, business, service organizations, and agencies share their time and donate funds and toys, warm clothing, and hygiene items for this project. Families receiving food assistance or FIP benefits are invited to apply for a "shop time" to choose items for their children. The goal is for each child to receive Hats/mittens, a warm outfit or coat, a toy, books, a stuffed animal, and some stocking stuffers (socks, hygiene items).

Pandora's Box and Up North Gift Company donated items. The Public Enrichment Foundation gave books. Those items not appropriate for children will be shared with senior citizens in Lake County.

The Rotary supports this program by donating funds for clothing as well as food for Christmas dinners which St. Ann's Catholic Church assembles.

New this year is a fund raising effort by the National Honor Society of Baldwin Community Schools. Bears may be purchased for \$1.00 each to support the Lake County Christmas Program. The bears can be found in local businesses throughout the county.

The Lake County Christmas Program is a community-wide endeavor to help people in need in Lake County. Anyone wishing to contribute their time, funds, or donations, please contact Dawn Bushouse at the Department of Human Services, (231) 745-8117 or (231) 689-5540. Toys (unwrapped) may be dropped off

at the following locations: Lake-Osceola Bank, Lake County Star, Amvets Post #1988, VFW Post #5315, Dollar General and the courthouse.



*Courtesy photo*  
Barbara Graham (left) of Rockford knitted 200 hats to warm the heads of Lake County youth. Dawn Bushouse (right), Community Resource Coordinator for the Department of Human Services, says more donations are needed to supply hats and mittens to 550 children.

Fax to  
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Please -  
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